

REMARKS/DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application.

Claim 11 is amended for non-statutory reasons, to sequentially label the reflecting layers as requested by the Examiner. The claims are not narrowed in scope and no new matter is added. The specification is also amended to add appropriate references to the newly-added FIG. 3.

DRAWINGS

By this amendment, Applicant adds a new drawing sheet for new FIG. 3, showing a housing, such as is recited in claim 13, having a reflecting layer provided thereon as recited in claim 18. No new matter is added.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 11 is amended to sequentially label the reflecting layers as requested by the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of the claim objection is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejects claim 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Hardesty U.S. Patent 2,945,313 ("Hardesty") in view of Nagai U.S. Patent 5,115,379 ("Nagai") and claims 3, 7 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Hardesty in view of Nagai and further in view of Kawano et al. U.S. Patent 6,404,131 ("Kawano").

Applicant respectfully traverses those rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1

Among other things, the device of claim 1 includes an optical waveguide plate.

Applicant respectfully submits that Hardesty does not include an optical waveguide.

The Office Action states that such a feature is disclosed in Hardesty as element 62.

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Applicant respectfully submits that Hardesty does not disclose that the light transmitting panel 62 is an optical waveguide. Instead, Hardesty discloses at col. 7, lines 7-8 that element 62 is “generally the same” as element 22 of FIGs. 1 and 2. Meanwhile, Hardesty discloses that “light-transmitting panel 22 comprises a flat, highly transparent sheet or plate of suitable size” (col. 4, line 74 - col. 5, line 1). Applicant respectfully submits that panel 62 could be nothing more than a plain glass sheet, and that nothing in Hardesty discloses or even suggests that it is an optical waveguide.

Nagai does not remedy this shortcoming.

Therefore, no combination of Hardesty and Nagai could produce the device of claim 1.

Furthermore, the device of claim 1 includes a plurality of cavities, each cavity having an upper side coated with a first reflecting layer.

The Office Action states that such a feature is disclosed in Nagai as element 62.

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Applicant respectfully submits that Nagai does not disclose that element 62 is a reflecting layer. Instead, Nagai discloses at col. 3, lines 31-32 that element 62 is a “dyed resin layer.” Meanwhile, Nagai discloses that “[t]he organic resin layer absorbs most of light of a radiation spectrum in the region 650-700 nm, but allows a small quantity of the light in the region so as to transmit a warning light having a radiation spectrum in the region” (emphasis added). Applicant respectfully submits that nothing in Nagai discloses or suggests that element 62 is a reflecting layer.

Hardesty does not remedy this shortcoming.

Therefore, for at least this additional reason, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over any possible combination of Hardesty and Nagai.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the device of claim 1 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Hardesty and Nagai.

Claims 2, 4, 5 and 12

Claims 2, 4, 5 and 12 depend from claim 1 and are deemed patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

Claims 3 and 7

Claims 3 and 7 depend from claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that Kawano does not remedy the shortcoming of Hardesty and Nagai with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3 and 7 are patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, and for the following additional reasons.

In the devices of claims 3 and 7, the cavities are coated with a second reflecting layer at their lower sides.

The Office Action states that such a feature is disclosed in Kawano as element 17.

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Kawano teaches that element 17 is an inner wall of a light reflective case 16a wherein the display body 11 is installed and supported, not a coating on the cavity (lamp-accommodating pit 13) of the display body 11. Indeed, in item 13 on the Office Action, the Examiner also identifies and recognizes "a reflecting layer (17a, 17b) provided on inside walls of the housing" (page 7, lines 12-13).

Accordingly, for at least these additional reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3 and 7 are patentable over Kawano.

PROVISIONAL OBVIOUSNESS-TYPE DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTIONS

Applicant acknowledges the *provisional* obviousness-type double patenting rejections of: claims 1-7 and 12 over claims 1-7 and 12 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano; claims 1, 3, 7 and 8 over claim 8 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano; claims 1 and 9 over claim 9 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano; claims 1, 10 and 11 over claims 10 and 11 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano; claims 13-18 over claim 8 of co-pending U.S. Patent

Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano; claims 13, 15 and 19 over claims 13 and 14, and 19 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano; and claims 13 and 20 over claim 10 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application 10/050,260 in view of Kawano. Once this application is deemed by the Examiner otherwise to be in condition for allowance such that no further amendments are needed, Applicant will be prepared to sign and submit an appropriate, proper Terminal Disclaimer.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing explanations, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and reexamine the present application, allow claims 1-20 and pass the application to issue. In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact Kenneth D. Springer (Reg. No. 39,843) at (703) 715-0870 to discuss these matters.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment (except for the issue fee) to Deposit Account No. 50-0238 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE FRANCOS, P.L.L.C.

Date: 15 July 2004

By:



Kenneth D. Springer
Registration No. 39,843

VOLENTINE FRANCOS, P.L.L.C.
12200 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 150
Reston, Virginia 20191
Telephone No.: (703) 715-0870
Facsimile No.: (703) 715-0877